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# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

## RECENT DECORATION IN NEW YORK.

**T**HE MUTUAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY, of New York, have lately made a very large addition to their already mammoth office building in Nassau Street, and the entire interior has been newly decorated under the superintendence of Mr. Thos. Harrington, of No. 1591 Broadway. He has had a force of sixty men employed in the building for some months past, and we feel safe in saying that the decoration of the interior of the entire structure, now almost completed, equals anything hitherto attempted on public buildings either in this country or in Europe. All the designs are in white or old ivory, cream and gold, and the ornamentation throughout is either in classical Renaissance or Louis XVI styles.

The floors of the building throughout are of white marble, and there is a marble wainscoting around the walls of the corridors and staircases four feet in height from the ground right up to the eighth story. The door frames and trimmings are also of polished marble, and there is a profusion of carved marble, carved mahogany and patent plaster ornamentations to be seen everywhere. The ceiling of the main office extends to the third story of the building, and is supported by four immense transverse beams forming five panels. The beams rest on Herculean pillars, the capitals of each pillar and the Renaissance scrolls on the beams, which are molded in patent plaster in high relief, as well as the stiling of the ceiling, including the dentals, moldings and brackets thereon, are all one solid blaze of gold on a dark cream ground. The centre of each panel in the ceiling is also in dark cream, and the three feet wide border thereon has the honeysuckle repeat, in plain gold penciled on a dark cream ground. This ceiling alone required 11,000 books of gold leaf. Between the heavily moulded arches of the windows and the ceiling, on one side of the apartment, there are triangular panels filled with life-size classical figures, having flowing draperies all moulded in high relief, the coloring representing old ivory effects. The figures above the windows represent night and morning, agriculture and commerce, etc. The effect of this ceiling is at once rich and splendid, and has that profound feeling of majesty and repose which is possessed by all Greek art. The President's room is a gorgeous apartment; the effect here is gold and white, like that of the other rooms of the building. The pilasters that decorate the walls are picked out with gold lines and have gold capitals. The frieze has heavily moulded gilt swags on a white or pale cream ground. The ceiling possesses a square gilt border of flat Greek ornament and this encloses an oval panel that has also a flat border of Greek ornament in gold, on a pale cream field. The portrait of Mr. Winston, a former President of the Company, painted in oil on canvas, is embedded in the wall in a carved white and gold frame. The marble floor is covered with a large Persian rug. The offices of the Vice-President and the second Vice-President consist of separate suites of rooms having marble floors and trimmings and white and gold classic decorations and Oriental rugs. At every turn in the corridors leading from room to room there are the same marble floors and polished marble dadoes, and at intervals large bouquets of incandescent lights, in multi colored glass shields, sparkle like blazing jewels. The Treasurer has a suite of rooms consisting of two private rooms and three offices for his clerks. All are finished in a delicate pearl gray ground, the ornament being gold. The moulded design on frieze and ceilings are all of the Renaissance order, and the manner in which the decoration has been carried out reflects the highest credit both on the designer and his workmen. Everything possesses pure, refined and intensely decorative effects, and we leave such apartments wondering how any one should sigh for other colors than these light grays and creams contrasting with gold. The doors of each of the offices are of solid mahogany, executed by George Mulligan, 33 East 32d Street, New York, and contain each a large panel of rock crystal.

The President's dining room is a superb apartment finished in classic ornament in gold and white ground. Adjoining this apartment is the President's private dining room, which is a miracle of white and gold, and adjoining this latter is the guests dining room, a small apartment but the gem of the entire building. The walls are colored a pale rose tint, and are ornamented with large oval mirrors, heavily carved oval frames of oak, in Louis the XVI style, and garlands in patent plaster relief, also gilt, and the ceiling has a large panel formed of similar garlands bright with gold and pale rose effects.

There is a large dining room in the eighth story where the numerous officials and clerks of the Company partake of their mid-day meal.

As endorsement of above work, Thos. Harrington has since done the entire of Central Trust Company's building, 54 Wall Street, and Commercial Insurance Company's building, corner of Pine and William Streets; also, building of Fifth Avenue Bank of New York, 44th Street and Fifth Avenue.

## ARTISTIC IRON WORK.

**I**T IS HIGHLY GRATIFYING to note the progress made in artistic iron work, cast and wrought, whether in architectural constructional work for dwellings and other buildings, or countless movable objects that combine utility with ornament, or simply present ornamental features. Bronze itself, is rivalled in the sharpness and clearness with which designs can be rendered in cast iron. The manifold colorings that can be given to iron surfaces have resulted in altogether changing the character of house hardware fittings, now as attractive as they were formerly unsightly. In more elaborate artistic work, the faculty with which designs can be multiplied, assure the possession of fine productions at moderate cost.

The apparent freedom of treatment largely contributes to the effectiveness of wrought iron. Slight variations, the evidence of manipulation, show themselves in repeated parts. More too, can be accomplished by it in open work. Under the hammer of the smith, the iron with its rigid strength, assumes the ductile facility which allows it to realize, to a certain degree, the fantasies of the filagree worker. Technical difficulties are constantly encountered only to be conquered. Instinct and touch appear to share in the rapid manipulative processes. In this art industry, brass, copper, and bronze are often combined with the iron as giving increased richness of effect when carried out in such ornaments as leafage and strap-work. Deep red copper particularly, assorts well and facilitates the production of delicate details by its pliability.

A happy combination of elegance and utility is presented in plant vases for halls, stairway landings and gardens. Eminent landscape painters, as for instance, Claude, have introduced just such vases in their garden-like landscapes to add the charm of human art to that of nature. The range of these extends from the classical to the most capricious forms. One of square form, with sporting cupids at corners, has relief panels representing the four seasons, apparently replicas from sculptural designs. Another is supported by a pillar with leafy capital, which is engirt by the arms of two children in the round; the vase composed of closely wedged stalks developing into outspreading leaves at edge. Antique models, show serpents and dragons for handles and medallions on each side, with smaller ones at base. Some are engirt by pendants held up by children, cast partially in the round or sustained by bosses. Scattered objects, floral and leaf, in basso relievo on body of vase; these connected by tendrils are favorite devices, also medallion heads set in scroll or strap-work. A vase worthy of attention, rests on a pillar embraced by the arms of two children.

It is in garden fountains that some of the most successful efforts of designers in cast iron have been achieved. One of these displays at the base the figure of Neptune among breakers, partly moulded in the round; the stem is composed of stalks of imitative coral encircling a sea syren, while the fountain plays from out of a large nautilus shell.

It has been laid down as a principle of gate design, that the weight of ornament should be at the base, but this is a decided error. The bars and side supports represent the combined strength, and although the base need not be neglected ornaments between bars, either strictly geometric or apparently developed from them, or foliations filling the panels may properly be surmounted by wrought work of the latter description of a lightsome color character, determined by its extent. The eye is led upward, whether by straight lines or foliations, and is seen against the sky or surrounding foliage. Open cresting work, composed of curves, whether simple lines with twisted extremities or a design representing flowers and leaves, arranged in a somewhat pyramidal form may be made to constitute a satisfying finish. A stately gate, with arched frame, itself consisting of straight rods with slight ornaments at half their length, has the inner portion of the arch beautified by elaborate scrolls, this arch again surmounted by still finer work. Connected railing consists of alternating pillar standards supporting vases with panels in character with the gate.

Exquisite examples of chandeliers, for entrance halls, have the body suspended by chains composed of slender links intermingled with various minute devices having facets at various angles to reflect the light, and about which, for further varying of the surface here and there a small leaf projecting or curling in upon itself. The branches for lights are finely wrought. This slenderness of construction is an appropriate tribute to the inherent strength of the material, and contrasts well with more massive surroundings.

Specialties for church structural adornment in iron work are widely varied, while wrought screens take the lead. These should be metallic in expression. In one fine example may be seen foliage clinging to cornice and arch, corbel and cusp, and crochet with capitals of single columns and smaller clustered shafts foliated and flower enriched in copper, to which latter the repousse system is applied. As a matter of course, flowers and leaves are